



special
collections

DOUGLAS
LIBRARY

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY
AT KINGSTON



KINGSTON ONTARIO CANADA

A

S C H E M E

F O R

T H E C O A L I T I O N

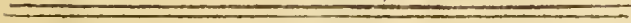
O F

P A R T I E S,

H U M B L Y S U B M I T T E D

T O

T H E P U B L I C K.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILKIE, in St. Paul's Church-Yard
M,DCC,LXXII.

AC 911. 1772. J45

A

S C H E M E

F O R T H E

C O A L I T I O N o f P A R T I E S.

OBSERVING it several times announced in the papers, that a certain able politician would shortly oblige the world with a scheme for the Coalition of all Parties: I have long waited with much impatience for a sight of so desirable a work from so eminent a hand; but, having been hitherto disappointed, I thought I could not employ a few leisure hours more beneficially for my country, than in adding my inconsiderable endeavours for the discovery of this im-

B portant

4 A SCHEME FOR THE

portant secret ; and that, the more heads were employed in a design so useful, the sooner, and the more completely, it would be finished. If the scheme of that ingenious gentleman should exactly correspond with mine, much weight will be added to my proposal ; but, if they should differ in a few particulars, the impartial and infallible publick may take their choice.

I shall not here follow the example of our modern reformers, civil and ecclesiastical, in pulling down without rebuilding, complaining without redressing, and opposing without proposing ; but shall offer a plain and simple scheme, which I am sure will be effectual, and hope will be unexceptionable to men of all parties, connexions, and denominations ; as it cannot fail to promote all their interests, as well as that of the public.

Before I presumed to prescribe, I thought it right to investigate the cause of the disease ; and therefore have diligently

gently enquired whether our present dissensions have arisen, as formerly, from any differences of opinions, or any contradictory articles in our political creeds ; but, on the strictest examination, I can find no such differences to exist : parties I see many, but cannot discern one principle amongst them; they are neither Whigs nor Tories, Monarchy-men nor Republicans, High-church nor Low-church, Hanoverians nor Jacobites: they have all acted alternately on all these principles, as they have served a present occasion ; but have adhered to none of them, nor even pretended to profess them : They have all been ready to support government, whenever they have enjoyed the administration of it ; and almost all as ready to subvert it, whenever they were excluded. I see few, very few, who have formed the most distant intentions of destroying the government, or changing the constitution of this country ; but, I am afraid, I see as few, who scruple to plunge them both into the most imminent danger, rather than

be stopped in the wild career of their headlong ambition: From whence it appears to me plainly demonstrable, that all our present dissensions are nothing more than an outrageous contest for power and profit, there being no other cause from whence they can possibly be derived. He, therefore, who can point out a method to put an end to this contest, need inquire no farther; the work is done, and a cordial and lasting coalition will immediately ensue.

In order to qualify myself for this task, and forming such a coalition, I have endeavoured to recollect all the plans, which have hitherto been offered, in writing or conversation, for this purpose; and I cannot remember one, that contained any thing more, than this short proposal, to dismiss all at that time in administration, and to admit the proposer and his friends into their places, which he always calls a coalition, and recommends as the only method to restore concord to a nation,

which

which he fails not to represent as much out of humour as himself. Although this plan may probably be perfectly right, as it has been universally adopted by all parties in their turns ; yet it has of late been tried with so little success, that I would by no means have it repeated, and therefore it shall make no part of my proposal.

I have likewise consulted some of the most indigent, thinking them the most disinterested patriots, struggling for that liberty and property of which they themselves enjoy so small a share, whose sentiments therefore had great weight with me on this important subject: but these all unanimously agree, that no concord, or coalition, can or ought to take place, until an effectual place-bill and annual parliaments shall be established; that these, and these alone, can put an end to our dissensions, by extirpating venality and corruption, and restoring to us an independent and honest representation; but so dull am I of apprehension, that the salutary effects

effects of these regulations do not appear to me quite so clear; because, though I know that honesty will make men independent, yet I do not see that independence will make them honest, nor that a parliament, if not honest; will be the less dangerous for being independent; nor can I comprehend, that multiplying corrupt elections will put an end to corruption; nor that the more frequent returns of expensive contests will promote the choice of those who have the least money to spend; nor, if such should be chosen, that they would be more independent because they were poorer, and consequently had more wants to be satisfied; all this may be very good logic, but it does not strike very forcibly on my understanding, and therefore neither of these regulations shall be admitted into my system.

I shall prescribe no remedies for national disorders, the effects of which I am not able to answer for, which perhaps after a long circuit through every vessel

vessel of the body politic may produce consequences directly contrary to my intentions ; and, instead of curing the present complaints, render them much worse or produce a new disease, more dangerous and more difficult to conquer: I shall rather strike at once at the great root of all political evils, which every one knows is the ministry itself ; and therefore, instead of recommending annual parliaments, I shall propose an annual administration ; in which single regulation my whole scheme is comprehended, and which I would have constituted in the following manner.

On the first day of every session of parliament, before any business should be proceeded on, an urn or box should be placed on the table of each house, in which should be deposited small pieces of paper, inscribed with the names of all the great offices in the state, household, treasury, and admiralty, and sealed up with the greatest secrecy and care, the names of those of-

fices which are usually appropriated to the members of each house being put into their respective boxes; I would then propose that a committee of thirty from the peers, and one hundred from the commons, of their most considerable members, should be chosen by ballot, or the whole be admitted if that should give more satisfaction, who should draw out these tickets from the urns or boxes, and immediately take possession of whatever post fortune should thus fling into their hands, and keep it unmolested and irremoveable during the next ensuing year, their commissions being made out accordingly: As to all inferior places, they should remain in the same hands, to prevent any confusion or interruption in the business of the publick, until they become vacant by deaths or promotions, and then they should be filled up by the principals in each department for the time being; by which means they will all have equal opportunities of providing for their friends and adherents, who will not then be very numerous or much wanted when offices

ces are attainable only by the foregoing method.

This scheme necessarily puts an end to all contests for power and profit, and with them to venality, corruption, and all our political diseases, which are but their unavoidable consequences : When nothing can be obtained by contention, we shall contend no more ; peace and harmony will return, and this much-sought for coalition immediately be effected. It is also, like all other great discoveries, so simple and obvious a remedy, that it is not a little surprizing that it should not have been before hit upon by some of those numerous state physicians, who daily study, and prescribe to the national constitution.

But, in order the better to explain its operations, and shew its salutary effects, I shall consider it under the following heads ; how it will affect the King, how the administration, how the opposition, and how the nation. And
here

here I beg leave to premise, that by these I would not be understood to mean those only who now fill those situations, but all kings, administrations, and oppositions, that do, or shall at any time exist hereafter.

First then as to the King ; I am sensible that this scheme will rob him of one of the choicest of his prerogatives, the disposal of all offices of trust and profit ; wisely, as some have thought, placed in his royal hands by the constitution for the most salutary purposes ; though improperly in the opinion of others, to whose share none of them have fallen : therefore I should by no means advise, that so capital and so hazardous an alteration should be made permanent by law, but only tried for a few years, as an experiment, whose consequences cannot be well ascertained until they become visible by practice. But, however it may affect the rights of the crown, it will certainly relieve the possessor from innumerable trouble ; the jewel here taken away is indeed one of its
richest,

richest, yet it is one of the heaviest loads on the head of the wearer, and cannot fail to convert it into a crown of thorns. It is indeed a prodigious power ; but it is a perplexing power, which serves only to make the many solicitors who must be refused angry, and the few who are obliged ungrateful : It is indeed a pre-eminence of royalty, but it is a painful pre-eminence ; and to relinquish it, would be an escape from most of the disquietudes which attend that exalted but uneasy situation. Could this be done, a wise, a just and virtuous prince would no longer lie under the disagreeable necessity of preferring knaves for their intrigues, profligates for their abilities, and fools for their connections ; nor any more be molested with addresses, remonstrances, and petitions ; for no excluded party, if my scheme was established, would ever address to remove an administration, which, like a butterfly, could survive but one season ; none would remonstrate against grievances, which, by their acquisition of places, would all be very soon redressed ;

fed ; nor petition to dissolve a parliament, which will probably fall ready made into their own hands in the course of a few months.

From ministers in possession only I expect objections ; but, if they would consider how greatly this scheme will contribute to their own ease and advantage, objects to which they usually pay some regard, they cannot, I think, refuse it their concurrence : for whenever they shall be so fortunate as by this means to get into power, they will be sure to keep it for a whole twelvemonth ; and not only keep it, but keep it unmolested by all opposition : for, when power is thus placed in the hands of Fortune, she alone can be blamed for the unsuccessful efforts of ambition, and the disappointment of men's own imaginary merit. This will exempt all ministers from the most disagreeable embarrassments of their office ; they will no longer be obliged to neglect their supporters, and promote their adversaries, nor to reward every one in proportion

tion as they abuse them ; a conduct, which though habit, I know, renders less painful than might be imagined ; yet must ever be inconvenient, because it cannot fail to create new adversaries and new abuses. They will no longer be dependent on the caprice of a mistress or a favourite, nor even on the will of their sovereign himself ; nor will they be distressed, if they should be so uncommonly unfortunate, as to have to deal with a prince, who has not one vice, attachment, or prejudice, by the indulgence of which he can be either purchased or controuled. They will no longer be obliged to court the humours, or satisfy the demands, of an insatiable parliament ; nor reduced to the humiliating necessity of frequent applications to recruit the revenues of the civil-list, exhausted by corrupting men to be honest, and paying them for that support to government, for which their own interest and duty ought to have been sufficient inducements ; and whenever they are displaced by this rotation, they can have no cause to be angry,

and

and therefore cannot be tempted to disgrace themselves, by inlisting immediately into opposition, by unsaying all they have said, undoing all they have done, defeating every measure which they had adopted, and sacrificing their principles and characters to gratify their resentments. As they will have little to promise, and less to bestow, they will be little troubled with those two worst species of persecutors, their friends and their enemies ; they will no longer be baited in senates, reviled in news-papers, and insulted in the streets ; and both their promises and their windows will be less frequently broken ; in short, they will oftner be able to dine as regularly, to sleep as quietly, and walk as securely, as the most insignificant man in the kingdom. I shall add but one other inducement to prevail on ministers to agree to my proposal ; an inducement, which perhaps they may think too inconsiderable to be mentioned ; which is this, that by it they will be placed in a situation, in which they may be capable of doing some service to
their

their country ; in which they may enjoy leisure and quiet, sufficient to enable them to form and execute some plans for the regulation of our police, the re-establishment of our government, and payment of our debts ; all which, in their present state of being pilloried and pelted, are utterly impracticable. If there should be any in administration, who are skilled in, or fond of play, their patronage I may surely depend on, as my scheme will afford them a new and entertaining game, in which Fortune will be the disposer of all good things ; a lady, with whom they have had so long an intimacy, and with whom they may be presumed to have no inconsiderable interest.

To the Opposition, I think, few arguments need be used, to persuade them to support a scheme so manifestly calculated for their advantage ; which will immediately extricate them from a laborious and unprofitable situation, and give them an equal chance with others of acquiring the most honourable and

C

profitable

profitable offices in the state, of which at present they seem to have no chance at all. Whenever they shall be so lucky as to be elected by this means into power, they will then enjoy all the benefits which I have just now enumerated, in the situation of ministers ; and whenever they shall be unfortunately excluded, their condition even then will be much preferable to their present ; for they will be delivered from the troublesome and barren occupation of fruitless opposition, which will then exist no more : They will therefore no longer be obliged to toil and sweat whole days and nights, in supporting questions which they disapprove ; and motions which they neither expect nor wish to carry ; they will no more be obliged to expend their own fortunes in forming clubs, cementing factions, fomenting tumults, and purchasing petitions, on the bare possibility of being some time or other reimbursed by the public. They will no longer be compelled to deceive the people, whose interests they regard ; to debase the character,

rafter, and abandon the privileges of both Houfes of Parliament, of which they are members ; or to insult the Sovereign, whom they love and honour, and whose favour is their principal purfuit ; nor, if all thefe fhould fail, to call in a patriotic plague, famine, or war, to their affiftance : This conduct, I know, is ftrictly juftifiable, from neceffity, and fidelity to connections, and warranted by precedents innumerable and immemorial ; but yet, on reflection, muft certainly be difagreeable to honeft and ingenuous minds. Besides an exemption from thefe Herculean labours, they will acquire, even during their exclusion, no inconfiderable pecuniary advantage ; for the reverfionary chance of a lucrative place in the choice of next year, will fetch no contemptible fum in the prefent ; and I doubt not, as foon as my fcheme fhall be eftablifhed, will be as exactly calculated, and as readily done at Jonathan's, as a Lottery Ticket, or Bank or India Stock, for the opening.

Let

Let us now see how this my scheme will affect the nation. And here I discern a most agreeable prospect ; for I see an end to all parliamentary contests, the offspring of self-interest, and parent of corruption ; and with it an end to all those factions and discontents, those misconducts and misfortunes, which have divided and distressed this country for above half a century :

“ Hâc fonte derivata clades

“ In patriam populumque fluxit.”

From this impure source they have all proceeded ; from this has every calamity issued, that has overflowed the land : It was this that produced a Spanish war in the year 1739, which produced a French war, which after a short peace produced another French, another Spanish, a German, and American war ; these produced a national debt of one hundred and fifty millions, with innumerable and never-ceasing taxes to defray their interest ; these have produced loans, jobs, contracts, and all manner of plunder ; these have produced pri-
vate

vate riches and public poverty, which have produced high price of provisions, dearth of labour, complaints of manufacturers, luxury and idleness, riots and tumults, with all those numerous grievances, which the nation really feels, or fancies that she feels, from her present nervous disposition.

All these, I question not, will be prevented in future by my proposal; to which I have never heard any objections, except the two following, which I shall endeavour to answer.

First, that these annual changes in administration will occasion such continual changes in measures, that no system, foreign or domestic, could be pursued with steadiness and effect. To this I reply, that, under the present mode of government, this must certainly be the consequence of such frequent changes; but, under the regulations of my scheme, they will have no such operations; because the new ministry, being introduced without

contest,

contest, will be under no necessity of counteracting every measure which had been adopted by the old : They will not be mortgaged to old connections and old animosities, nor embarrassed by old principles and old professions; and therefore they will not be obliged in honour to involve the nation in a war, because the last ministry had concluded a peace ; nor to relinquish taxes of which they might avail themselves, because they had formerly voted against them ; nor to wink at libels, and indulge riots, because they had once been useful ; nor to ruin themselves by the same arts by which they had ruined their predecessors, to prove the consistency of their conduct. This rotation of ministers will therefore be so far from changing systems, that it will contribute very much to continue them : for, if any one administration should happen to fix upon any one system, the rest, having no inducement to alter it, will probably pursue it in preference to the trouble of finding out another. But if the worst should happen, and no system

at

at all be pursued, the nation perhaps might not suffer so much as may be imagined ; for what system can we remember to have been ever strictly adhered to in this country, except this, that opposition should do mischief, and ministers embarrassed by a perpetual warfare do nothing ; and yet under this we have constantly gone on, improving in wealth, trade, liberty, power, and prosperity, to this hour.

The other is, that if all opposition is by this scheme put an end to, there will remain no check upon evil ministers, and the people will be left a defenceless prey to their tyranny and rapacity. This, indeed, is a formidable objection ; and so tenacious am I of the liberties of the people, and so jealous of the encroachments of ministerial power, that, if I thought my proposal would be attended with consequences so fatal, I would instantly abandon it, in spite of all the parental fondness of a projector. But of this I cannot entertain the least apprehensions ; for although it will de-

stroy

stroy all opposition in Parliament, where it is seldom honest, and always hurtful; yet it will leave it in full vigour amongst the people, where it is often honest, and seldom injurious to the publick: enough of it will remain in the hearts and mouths of common-council-men, livery-men, and freeholders, to watch over the conduct of ministers; here is its native soil, and here it ought always to be cultivated: but whenever it takes root amongst the great, whenever it shoots up into courts, councils, and senates, it soon degenerates into selfish and angry factions, who, under a pretended zeal for the welfare of the publick, are contending only who shall first sacrifice it to the mean ends of private ambition or avarice: For true English opposition to government is like that respectable animal the true English mastiff, who, when permitted to prowl and roar about the yards and out-houses, is a faithful, honest, and intrepid guardian; but, if admitted into the drawing-room, becomes a very offensive and a very dangerous visitor.

And

And here, by the bye, I cannot but applaud the honest sagacity of that honourable society, the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, who have declared eternal war with all great men, esteeming them dangerous coadjutors in the cause of liberty, and wisely concluding, that it is impossible that persons possessed of exalted titles, vast property, and extensive power, should ever be in earnest, in endeavouring to destroy their own superiority, and the subordination of others.

Much more might be urged in favour of my scheme ; but I shall leave it to its own apparent merits for success, and shall now conclude with this single caution to my readers, not to imagine that there is any thing in the foregoing pages in the least degree ludicrous ; a caution which I think not altogether unnecessary, from frequently observing, that plain truths, concisely expressed, and brought home to mens minds, are apt to strike on the very same chords in the human brain, which are peculiarly

arly appropriated to wit and humour, and are therefore often mistaken for them: for which reason, I forewarn all, who shall peruse this short essay, against falling into this common error; and assure them, that, in these considerations on this serious subject, not any wit, nor any humour except good-humour, is, or was ever intended to be admitted; nor is the least reflexion designed on the conduct of any man, or set of men, whatever: my scheme is solely founded on conjecture, arising from the known principles of human nature which concludes that men will act in such a manner, in such circumstances, and such situations. It is not here asserted that any have so acted in such situations; but only supposed, that the generality of mankind eternally will.

F I N I S.

